

MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting: Colorado River Management Committee, Denver, Colorado

Date: April 7, 2000

Attendees: See Attachment 1

>Assignments are highlighted in the text.

CONVENE: 9:30 a.m.

1. Introductions. Review/modify agenda and time allocations - The agenda was revised as it appears below.
2. Approve February meeting summary - Deferred until next meeting.
3. Program Updates
 - a. Ouray hatchery construction - Brent Uilenberg noted that a brief status update was posted to the listserver yesterday. The hatchery will be operational this year, but due to the constantly variable water quality, we won't be able to use the ozone treatment system. As a result, we won't have the needed water quality to meet all fish production needs. Brent suggested that it's time to evaluate where we're at with Ouray. Options include moving the facility, finding a different water source, etc. Tom Pruitt is looking into a municipal water supply for the hatchery water needs (35 gpm). Unfortunately, the hatchery and water treatment facility were built by firms with no previous hatchery experience. Further tests by hatchery engineers are planned after the larval fish are stocked out into the ponds (late May - early June). The Committee will discuss this again at their next meeting.
 - b. Grand Valley water management - Brent said that the Colorado Department of Parks and Recreation has had water quality concerns with the proposed pumping plant agreement at Highline Lake, but it appears that agreement will be reached fairly soon. Grand Valley has given their okay to proceed with all the construction contracts contingent upon the Program agreeing to an alternate storage reservoir if an MOU with CDOPR can't be reached. Brent said that the chances of the pumping plant creating water quality problems are extremely small. CWCB and CDOW have agreed to cover water quality remedies up to \$20,000/year, but should costs exceed that amount, they would like to be able to bring the problem to the Program for consideration. The Committee agreed. The Service would like a minor change to the MOU on page 2 in the NEPA portion, which needs to say "proposed to be constructed." The Committee agreed that the Program is committed to moving forward with the alternate storage reservoir if agreement cannot be reached with CDOPR on the Highline pumping plant. John Shields asked that >Brent extend an invitation on the river trip to Dick Proctor. >Bob Norman will make the word change to the agreement and Brent will get copies to CDOPR and Bruce McCloskey . No Implementation Committee conference call will be required on Monday.
 - c. FWS Realty proposal to work on floodplain acquisition - Henry Maddux said they've been working with Reclamation's and the Service's realty departments to complete and implement this scope of work. >Henry agreed to have the Service provide regular updates on their progress.
4. Humpback Chub and Colorado Pikeminnow Recovery Goals "Policy" - Henry Maddux gave an overview of the recovery goal development process. Rich Valdez distributed a summary of the recovery goals which reflects comments from Monday's meeting with the Biology Committee. The Recovery Team will issue their recommendation to Ralph Morgenweck on the recovery goals for all 4 species after their tentative meeting scheduled for

May 31 - June 1 in Grand Junction.

- a. Identification of issues. (*As issues were addressed, this is reflected in italics.*)

What if the objective, measurable recovery criteria are achieved without achieving the site-specific management actions?

What amounts of flows need to be provided and protected?

The site-specific actions contain caveats like “if necessary” and “as needed.” According to who?

It needs to be understood that the site-specific management actions in the goals are *categories* of management actions, but the specific recovery actions are in the RIPRAP.

Must recovery include populations in both Upper and Lower basins? If the measurable recovery criteria are met in the Upper Basin, must downlisting/delisting in the Upper Basin rely on meeting the Lower Basin measurable recovery criteria? Once all the criteria have been met in the Upper Basin (and perhaps not the Lower), then what changes for ESA compliance for water projects in the Upper Basin? Something has to happen at that point. *Can the ESA assessment at that point be “no adverse affect” or no jeopardy?* Is there a way to address both basins together for the humpback chub and for the other three species to address the basins separately? And if so, how do we address the San Juan? *To separate populations for recovery, they must be biologically discrete, which does not apply in these cases. Is there no flexibility here? >The Service will re-examine the potential for flexibility here (whether separate criteria are possible for the upper and lower basins) and report back to the Management Committee on the potential solutions (then the Committee likely will schedule a conference call).*

What are mechanisms for legal flow protection, etc. in the Little Colorado River?

Why are lower basin refugia pikeminnow required to be maintained? (*Failsafe backup in case upper basin populations ever are lost.*)

Grand Canyon - 2nd population of humpback chub, vs. additional stability by expanding the existing population.

Do spill emergency response plans have preventive measures? Some assessment may be needed with these.

What about maintaining passage between humpback populations (this was in the March version, but not the current version)? Perhaps “maintain existing connections between populations” is appropriate for humpback as well as for pikeminnow and razorback. How would this be legally assured?

Wording in B.1 (and similar) needs to be clear that natural population fluctuation is accommodated. Can we meet downlisting criteria 1.a.? Is this too stringent? Must all 6 populations be maintained according to the criteria, or is 5 of 6 adequate? Concerns regarding what would cause us to “reset the clock” in the trend estimates. *Combine 1.a. & b.*

Must 15 years be required for delisting bonytail and razorback?

Why don't stocked fish count toward the recovery goals? *Henry says they do count once they've begun to reproduce.*

5. Flaming Gorge Synthesis Report - Art Roybal summarized that Biology Committee met and discussed the Flaming Gorge Synthesis report and the report was approved by all Biology Committee members **except** for the environmental groups' representative; so the report has been elevated to the Management Committee for approval. The environmental groups provided a minority report to the Management Committee. Robert Wigington said their concern is with the magnitude of the recommended base flows. They believe there is a valid scientific difference of opinion regarding the translation of the individual studies to the recommendations in the synthesis report. Robert said he is willing to abstain on a vote on this report *if* there will be valid stakeholder involvement (not meaning something as extensive as the 15-Mile Reach PBO process, however) in the Flaming Gorge biological opinion process. Chris Karas said their standard mode of operation has been to share a draft biological opinion with the interested stakeholders and: 1) adopt all the comments they believe are valid as their own; and 2) submit verbatim *all* the comments received for the Service's consideration, as well. Shane Collins noted that the NEPA process is the other forum where all concerns will be heard. Robert said he would like to know what opportunity might exist for some level of dialogue prior to releasing a draft opinion. Chris said that they would be willing to include the minority report in the information they submit to the Service for the consultation. Shane and Chris added that the recommendations will be implemented in an adaptive management process. John Reber noted that the Park Service has provided detailed comments on the Flaming Gorge Synthesis report, but don't believe their three major concerns have been fully addressed. The Park Service doesn't believe the Committee should accept the report as written as final at this time. The Committee approved the Flaming Gorge Synthesis report as final with Robert Wigington abstaining from the vote, based on Reclamation's commitment to entertain dialogue from other stakeholders in the consultation process.
6. Final discussion/arrangements for Washington, D.C. briefing trip - John Shields distributed a draft briefing for the Western Water Caucus; >any changes are due to John Shields by 10 a.m. on Monday morning. Senate hearing on long-term funding legislation is scheduled for April 25; Leslie James, Greg Walcher, Tom Pitts, Robert Wigington and/or Dan Luecke, and someone from Interior will testify.
7. Service Sufficient Progress Determination - Susan Baker distributed a draft of their annual sufficient progress assessment. >The Service will add the Highline fish net as an accomplishment and finalize this so that D.C. briefing trip participants will have 20 copies to distribute.
8. Final draft RIPRAP - Per Tom Pitts' request at the Implementation Committee meeting, Angela Kantola distributed the draft final RIPRAP. >Any comments are due to Angela by April 24.
9. Next meeting: (The Committee scheduled a conference call on April 28th from 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. to discuss recovery goals, but the Service subsequently asked for a change in this date and time. A new date and time will be determined by April 24.) June 7 in Craig (prior to the river trip). August - Date and location to be determined. The primary agenda items for the June 7 meeting will be recovery goals. Review and approval of the draft FY 2001 work plan will be a focus of the August meeting.

ADJOURN: 3:30 p.m.

Attachment 1
Colorado River Management Committee, Denver, Colorado
April 7, 2000

Management Committee Voting Members:

Brent Uilenberg and Chris Karas	Bureau of Reclamation
Bruce McCloskey	State of Colorado
Tom Pitts	Upper Basin Water Users
Robert Wigington	The Nature Conservancy
John Shields	State of Wyoming
Shane Collins	Western Area Power Administration
Susan Baker	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

(No representative from the State of Utah was able to attend this meeting.)

Nonvoting Members:

<u>Henry Maddux</u>	Recovery Program Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Dave Mazour	Colorado River Energy Distributors Association

Recovery Program Staff:

Angela Kantola	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Bob Muth	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Others:

Ray Tenney	Colorado River Water Conservation District
Larry Crist	Bureau of Reclamation
Chris Treese	Colorado River Water Conservation District
Gary Burton	Western Area Power Administration
Rich Valdez	SWCA, Inc.
Tom Nesler	Colorado Division of Wildlife
John Reber	National Park Service
Ron Ryel	SWCA, Inc.
Art Roybal	Western Area Power Administration